

Helen L. Kellogg Houses



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The glass and wrought-iron entrance doors of 2960 North Lake Shore Drive West.
(Timothy Barton, photographer)

HELEN L. KELLOGG HOUSES

2946 North Lake Shore Drive West

Chester Walcott, architect; constructed in 1928

2952 North Lake Shore Drive West

Edwin A. Seipp, architect; constructed in 1915

2960 North Lake Shore Drive West

Howard Van Doren Shaw Associates, architects;
constructed in 1928

During the years immediately preceding the First World War and continuing through the decade that followed it, a number of Chicago's leading citizens built residences for themselves in the eastern part of the Lake View area near Lincoln Park and the lake. Among those structures remaining are three located on Lake Shore Drive West between Oakdale and Wellington avenues. The houses, which were owned by the late Helen Kellogg, wife of the president of the Kellogg cereal company, demonstrate the character of this part of the city during the early years of the century and provide a visually striking transition between the broad expanse of the lake and park and the density of later high rise buildings to the west.

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History of Lake View

The North Side community of Lake View comprises what was originally the eastern portion of the larger Lake View Township. The township, bounded by Devon and Fullerton avenues, and Western Avenue and the lake, was organized in 1854 and included the villages of Ravenswood, Summerdale, Bowmanville, Andersonville, Rosehill, and Gross Park. In 1837, Conrad Sulzer and his wife, who were Swiss immigrants, had settled in the northern portion of the area. These first white settlers inhabited land formerly occupied by several Indian tribes who had established a trail through the area. The settlers subsequently called this trail Green Bay Road (now Clark Street) because it connected Fort Dearborn in Chicago with Fort Howard in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Another route, the Little Fort Road (now Lincoln Avenue), led northwest to Little Fort, located at what is now the city of Waukegan, the Indian word for "little fort."

Most of the early settlers were Swiss, German, and Scandinavian immigrants who established farms throughout the western portion of Lake View. Truck farming was the major occupation there through the 1870s. In southern Lake View east of Clark Street was an extensive wooded area that later became Lincoln Park. Elsewhere in eastern Lake View were several large estates and an inn called the Lake View House. The community took its name from this inn which was built by James H. Rees and Elisha E. Hundley in 1853 on the shore of Lake Michigan at what is now Byron Street. Local legend has it that shortly after the structure was completed and before the owners had named it, dry goods merchant Walter L. Newberry stood on its portico and suggested the name because of the unobstructed view of Lake Michigan afforded by the hotel to its guests. The resort gained a favorable reputation among prominent Chicagoans and as a result the environs grew in popularity. By the time Lake View House closed in 1890, land sales in the area were booming.

In the 1880s and 1890s, industry supplanted agriculture in western Lake View; land not used for industry was bought by developers and subdivided into many 25-foot and some 50-foot lots for homes for the factory workers. One of the major manufacturing interests was the Deering Harvester Works on Fullerton Avenue. It covered more than 25 acres and employed 1500 men in the manufacturing of reapers, mowers, and other farm machinery. Another prominent manufacturer was the North Western Terra Cotta Works, established in 1877 and located at Clybourn and Wrightwood avenues beginning in 1883. The company was one of the leading suppliers of architectural terra cotta through the last two decades of the nineteenth century and its products are seen on many of Chicago's commercial buildings, including important downtown structures such as the Rookery (209 South LaSalle Street; designated a Chicago Landmark by the City Council of Chicago on July 5, 1972), the Reliance Building (32 North State Street; designated a Chicago Landmark by the City Council of Chicago on July 11, 1975), and the Fisher Building (343 South Dearborn Street; designated a Chicago Landmark by the City Council of Chicago on June 7, 1978).

As Chicago's population expanded, many residents sought relief from the crowded neighborhoods, and improved transportation to Lake View facilitated their settlement there. The upgrading of transportation arteries began in 1855 with the construction of the Lake View Plank Road, which followed Green Bay Road from Fullerton Avenue to Diversey Avenue, and then continued north along what is now Broadway to Irving Park Road. One year later, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad laid the first railroad tracks through the area along the route now used by the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Railway service to the area was expanded in 1870 with the establishment of commuter service by the North Chicago Street Railway.



The Lake View Town Hall was built in 1873 at the corner of Halsted and Addison streets. It reflected the growth of the community since its incorporation as a town in 1865.
(Courtesy of the Ravenswood-Lake View Historical Collection, Hild Regional Library)

Improved transportation to Lake View as well as its developing urban character caused a rapid growth in population. In 1887, Lake View received a city charter and elected William Boldenweck as its first mayor. Two years later, the community voted to annex itself to the city of Chicago. The period from 1885 to 1894 saw substantial building activity in Lake View. Single-family and small multiple-family dwellings continued to be built west of Clark Street while the large estates east of Clark were subdivided for the construction of single-family homes and apartment buildings. Concurrent with these developments was the appearance of commercial establishments on main streets throughout the community.



The house at 2952 Lake Shore Drive West was designed by Edwin A. Seipp and built in 1915 for Frank A. Hecht. It is the oldest of the three Kellogg houses.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

Most of the area east of Sheridan Road between Diversey Parkway and Belmont Avenue was formed from landfill. In 1845, the shore line of the lake ran northwest from a point just east of Commonwealth Avenue and Diversey. Over a period of fifty years, land owners erected pilings out in the lake around which the lake tides deposited sand, forming a new shore line that was coincident with the current Lake Shore Drive West. Shortly after the annexation of Lake View to Chicago, plans were proposed to expand Lincoln Park north of Diversey to Devon Avenue. As part of these plans, a landfill was created beginning in the 1890s that eventually brought the area between Diversey Parkway and Belmont Avenue to its present configuration.

The expansion of Lincoln Park and the availability of large tracts of undeveloped land soon attracted socially prominent families to the area. In 1912, Arthur Burr Meeker, Sr., general manager of the Armour meat packing company, bought a parcel of land on Barry Avenue across from Lincoln Park. Meeker commissioned noted New York architect Charles A. Platt to design a house for Meeker and his family. Construction of the residence was completed in 1913. The Meeker house, a three-story Georgian revival structure, still stands at 303

West Barry Avenue with later additions to its south and west sides. In 1915, Mrs. A. Montgomery Ward, widow of the mail order entrepreneur, commissioned Howard Van Doren Shaw to design a town house for her at 325 West Wellington Avenue. Shaw was a prominent Chicago-area architect whose designs can best be described as eclectic, drawing on the Renaissance, Gothic, and Georgian revival styles that were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Ward house was purchased in 1920 by Lester Armour, scion of the meat packing family, who called on Shaw five years later to remodel the house for him. The present appearance of the house dates to this 1925 remodeling. Other successful businessmen continued to settle in the area through the 1930s.

The Kellogg Houses

In 1915, Frank A. Hecht commissioned architect Edwin A. Seipp to design the house at 2952 Lake Shore Drive West. Hecht, president of a machine manufacturing firm,

The arched pattern of the first-floor windows on the Hecht house is repeated in the hooded doorway.
(Timothy Barton, photographer)





The Hecht house (center), 2952 Lake Shore Drive West, offered an unobstructed view of Lincoln Park and Oakdale Avenue for the first thirteen years of its existence. The Hulbert house (left) at 2946 was built to the south of it in 1928. That same year, the Heineman house (right) was constructed to the north of the Hecht house at 2960. These three houses are one of the last remaining groups of large, free-standing residences along the lake shore. (Bob Thall, photographer)

was then living on Astor Street, and his move to Lake Shore Drive West reflected the growing popularity of the neighborhood. Seipp designed a three-story red brick Georgian revival structure. In keeping with the style, the east elevation has a formal arrangement. The first-floor windows are set into ornamented round-arched openings. Each of the second-floor windows is topped by a wedge-shaped lintel with a protruding keystone in the center. The windows at the third story are treated much more simply. In Georgian architecture window surfaces are broken up into smaller panes, or lights. The third-floor windows of the Hecht house are divided into a six-over-six arrangement; that is, there are six lights in the upper sash and six in the lower. The windows at the first and second floors may have been altered from their original design: the windows at the second story might have been eight-over-eight while the

first-floor windows might have had an eight-over-twelve pattern.

The detailing of Georgian designs conveys a feeling of refinement and grace. The major decorative element here is the swag motif in the ornament above the first floor windows and which is repeated in the band of ornament under the cornice. Ornamental features of the brickwork are more subtle, such as the brick quoins at the corners of the building and the panels of raised brick forming a square within a square at the third floor. Even the pattern in which the bricks are laid demonstrates the precision which went into this design. The bricks are laid in a Flemish bond in which the headers, or the ends of the bricks, and stretchers, the sides of the bricks, alternate in the same row of bricks. A limestone stringcourse between the second and third stories provides a contrast to the red brick.

The entrance of the house is on the south facade which originally afforded an unobstructed view of Lincoln Park. The south elevation is a departure from the usual symmetrical arrangements of Georgian architecture. In working with revival styles, architects would often take a free hand in arranging elements to fit the particular needs of their clients. Reviewing residential architecture of the early twentieth century in her book *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, Carole Rifkind comments that:

The Period Revival dwelling of the period from 1910 to 1930 tends to be quaint and informal although carefully disciplined. It does, on occasion, reproduce historic precedent with accuracy, but more often it assimilates and combines diverse motifs for convenience, gracious living, and artistic effect.

This tendency is illustrated in the south side of the Hecht house. The window openings have a variety of different sizes and shapes and are arranged in an irregular pattern across the facade. The prominent features on this elevation are a striking hooded doorway and a large multi-paned first-floor window.

The Hulbert house is a more faithful representation of Georgian architecture than the Hecht house, its neighbor to the north, because of its completely symmetrical facade.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)



The house at 2946 Lake Shore Drive West, built thirteen years after the Hecht house and immediately south of it, is a more faithful representation of Georgian architecture because of its completely symmetrical composition. The symmetry enhances the classically inspired portico at the entrance. Many of the windows have detailing similar to that of the Hecht house, although the windows of this structure have a more regular arrangement than those on the south elevation of the Hecht house. The brickwork is also comparable to that of the neighboring house. The bricks are laid in a modified English bond, which has rows of headers and stretchers alternating with each other. In this case, one row of headers alternates with five rows of stretchers. Another common feature of Georgian architecture is the hipped roof, one that is sloped inward on all four sides, as seen here with small dormer windows set into it. Chester Walcott was the architect for this house which was built for Mrs. Edmund D. Hulbert, who had been a neighbor of the Meeker family when they lived on Prairie Avenue. Mrs. Hulbert was the widow of a prominent banker who was instrumental in helping President Woodrow Wilson establish the Federal Reserve Banking System.

The Hulbert house has a simple classical entrance.
(Timothy Barton, photographer)



The two-story limestone structure at 2960 Lake Shore Drive West was constructed the same year as the Hulbert house and was designed by the office of Howard Van Doren Shaw for silk merchant Oscar Heineman. Shaw died in 1926, but his office continued to design residences in the revival styles that he used throughout his career. The Heineman house is an elegant adaptation of eighteenth-century French architecture. According to architectural historian Walter Creese, it is a structure "distinguished by sensitive proportions and the subtle handling of the smooth limestone wall surfaces and handsome iron work." The facade, overlooking Lincoln Park, has a symmetrical composition. The doorway, with its embellished bracket supporting the small second-floor porch, is flanked by three windows, each of which has a carved stone balustrade at its base and a limestone transom. Above each window is a carved limestone festoon. The second-story windows, with their delicately ornamented wrought-iron railings, are separated from the first floor by a string-course. The house is topped by a stone balustrade and a low hipped roof.



A photograph of Helen L. Kellogg taken in 1956.
(Chicago Tribune photo)

In 1926, John and Helen Kellogg purchased the house at 2952 Lake Shore Drive West. John Kellogg was the son of Will Keith Kellogg, founder of the cereal company bearing the family name. The elder Kellogg had been associated with a sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, that promoted, among other therapies, healthful diets for its patients. Through his work in developing health foods for the sani-

tarium, Kellogg acquired the expertise to start his own food business in 1906. John Kellogg worked for his father from 1908 to 1925, eventually becoming president of the company. An inventor, the younger Kellogg was responsible for developing more than 200 devices and processes used in the production and packaging of cereals. Kellogg left the company in 1925 after a dispute with his father and came to Chicago to start a packaging company called the Kellogg Box Board Company.



Overlooking Lincoln Park, the graceful facade of 2960 Lake Shore Drive West is reminiscent of eighteenth-century French architecture. It was designed in 1928 by the office of Howard Van Doren Shaw for silk merchant Oscar Heineman.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

The Kelloggs were widely known for their philanthropic activities. They gave millions of dollars to Chicago cultural, medical, educational, and religious institutions. Mrs. Kellogg was a major contributor to many charitable organizations and served on numerous boards, including those of the Lyric Opera, the Orchestral Association, and DePaul University. She donated funds for the Jade Room of the Field Museum of Natural History and for a gallery at The Art Institute of Chicago. She also funded Flanner Hall at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and the Flanner Science Building at Loyola University, both of which were named for her son by a previous marriage, Thomas Flanner III, who died in 1965. In 1979, the John L. and Helen Kellogg Foundation gave ten million dollars to Northwestern University's Graduate School of Management, which has subsequently been renamed the J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Subsequent to the death of her husband in 1950, Mrs. Kellogg acquired the two adjacent properties, buying the Heineman house in 1951 and the Hulbert house in 1971. In 1978, Mrs. Kellogg died in the house that had been her home for fifty-two years.



The numerical address of 2960 Lake Shore Drive West was carefully worked into the wrought-iron ornament of the front entrance. (Timothy Barton, photographer)

The surroundings of the Kellogg houses have changed considerably over the years. High-rise construction along Sheridan Road has encroached upon many of the older single-family dwellings. The Kellogg houses, however, have remained intact with comparatively little change to their original setting. Sited across from Lincoln Park, the residences provide a transition from the lake and park to the more dense developments to the west. The Kellogg houses are one of the last remaining groups of large free-standing, single-family residences along the Chicago lake shore and they illustrate the character of residential development in eastern Lake View in the early part of the twentieth century.

The Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks was established in 1968 by city ordinance, and was given the responsibility of recommending to the City Council that specific landmarks be preserved and protected by law. The ordinance states that the Commission, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, can recommend any area, building, structure, work of art, or other object that has sufficient historical, community, or aesthetic value. Once the City Council acts on the Commission's recommendation and designates a Chicago Landmark, the ordinance provides for the preservation, protection, enhancement, rehabilitation, and perpetuation of that landmark. The Commission assists by carefully reviewing all applications for building permits pertaining to designated Chicago Landmarks. This insures that any proposed alteration does not detract from those qualities that caused the landmark to be designated.

The Commission makes its recommendations to the City Council only after extensive study. As part of this study, the Commission's staff prepares detailed documentation on each potential landmark. This public information brochure is a synopsis of various research materials compiled as part of the designation procedure.